

Oakfield Community Primary School

Edinburgh Road, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 8BQ

Inspection dates 24–25 February 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The dynamic, inspirational and determined headteacher, well supported by her senior leaders, has transformed learning at Oakfield. The school is rapidly improving because leaders and governors have tackled previous weaknesses.
- The quality of teaching is usually good or better. Teachers assess work carefully and give pupils good advice on how to improve.
- Pupils make good progress from very low starting points. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well, as do pupils who have special educational needs or disability, including pupils in both resource bases.
- In 2015, a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 made good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are kind and thoughtful towards one another. Their excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning contribute strongly to their success.
- Pupils thrive in the safe and secure school environment. Parents, pupils and staff agree that children are free from bullying and are very well looked after.
- Children make a good start in the vastly improved early years setting. They are now making good progress in this safe, stimulating environment.
- Governors are passionate about improving the life chances of children in this community by providing the best possible education. They are rigorous in holding the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet totally consistent and so pupils do not always make sustained progress.
- Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' learning through the use of effective, open-ended questioning.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 remains below national expectations.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of learning so that more pupils reach national expectations by ensuring that:
 - all lessons are set at a pace to maximise learning so that pupils make sustained progress
 - all teachers use questioning effectively to take learning further and provide even greater challenge.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is relentless in her determination to secure an excellent education for all pupils in the school. Under her outstanding leadership, all aspects of provision have improved. She is well supported by her good leadership team and, as a result, they have successfully driven the school forward by improving teaching and accelerating pupils' learning.
- Leaders and governors have created a culture where high expectations are the norm and the barriers to learning that some children face are not allowed to have a negative impact on their future. The focus is on strong personal development, emotional well-being and a very caring, safe learning environment.
- Improvement planning is based on a very secure understanding of what needs to be addressed so that the early years provision, the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), the quality of pupils' writing and the quality of teaching overall have rapidly improved since the previous inspection.
- Good-quality professional development has led to a confident, well-motivated teaching staff who are proud to be members of this school. Performance management targets are linked to the progress pupils make and an overall contribution to improving the school.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is good. Pupils make good progress whether in class or in the resource bases for Key Stages 1 and 2. These pupils all make good progress from their starting points because of effective teaching, nurture and leadership.
- Middle leaders who take responsibility for the development of different subjects such as literacy and numeracy across the school, science and other subjects are able to show how they lead in these areas and contribute to whole school improvement. The school development plan is focused on improving and developing these leaders further to take an even more active role.
- The curriculum has been designed to maximise pupils' enjoyment and progress and to give them a window on the world. It is enriched by many opportunities to engage in sport, music and drama, as well as a forest school initiative where pupils learn outdoors. Teachers organise numerous visits to places of interest and invite visitors to come into school. Key Stage 2 pupils are provided with an electronic notebook to use in school as an aid to research and learning. Key Stage 1 pupils have regular access to a personal computer in the infant suite.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to all learning and children are taught to think about and celebrate British values from the time they enter the Nursery. Older pupils have a good awareness of the dangers of exploitation and extremism through the personal, social and moral curriculum.
- The sport funding for primary schools is used well. Leaders have improved all outdoor play areas and offer many sporting opportunities such as swimming, gymnastics, athletics, dance, hockey, football, netball and cricket. Pupils can gain their cycling proficiency and 'Bikeability' awards. Outside providers come in to coach pupils in fencing, fitness, football and rugby. The funding enables the school to purchase good-quality equipment and to provide extra training for staff. Disadvantaged pupils are encouraged to take advantage of all these opportunities. In addition, the pupils take part in many sporting competitions with other schools as well as whole-school events such as class skipping. All of these initiatives result in more pupils enjoying and taking part in sport and exercise than previously.
- Leaders and governors have carefully managed pupil premium funding. A large part of this is used to keep class sizes as small as possible in order to make sure teachers have time to give every child the attention they need and deserve. Disadvantaged pupils are currently achieving better than others in school.
- The local authority holds the school in high regard.
- The partnership with Liverpool Hope University is beneficial to both communities. Oakfield takes many student teachers who gain a deep insight into the professional standards required in the teaching profession. The school benefits from the support of many extra adults so that even more pupils can have individual attention.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are rightly proud of the fact that the entire school shares a vision to ensure that all children overcome barriers to learning and thrive and succeed in their primary education.
 - Governors are committed to continual school improvement. They have a good knowledge and understanding of what is happening in school because the Chair of the Governing Body and headteacher meet weekly.

- Governors provide both challenge and support to the school. They are rigorous in their examination of the school's performance data and regularly ask questions about the progress of different groups in school and the quality of teaching. They work hard to keep in touch with parents.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school is proactive in all areas relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Leaders have excellent links with other agencies in order to keep pupils safe. They are exemplary in their attention to detail.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers plan lessons which build successfully on what the pupils already know so that in nearly every lesson pupils make progress. Teachers set high expectations for both enjoyment and learning and, as a result, pupils are busy throughout their lessons and are motivated learners. The good relationships which exist between pupils and teachers build pupils' confidence.
- Tasks are set which are appropriate to the levels of ability of the pupils in class. Teachers foster a 'safe to try' environment in which pupils are encouraged to attempt tasks which challenge them.
- Most of the time teachers use questioning very effectively to ensure that pupils think deeply, although sometimes there are missed opportunities to do this.
- Time is generally used well so that the right pace is set to make sure that lower-ability pupils as well as higher-ability pupils learn effectively. Sometimes, however, the pace is too slow and pupils could have moved on more quickly. Just occasionally the pace of a lesson is misjudged and so pupils are left behind and insecure in their learning.
- In mathematics, there are opportunities to consolidate and build on skills learned and to apply them in new situations. This was seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson where pupils were busily engaged in applying their knowledge of decimalisation in numerous different ways.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is now a strength of the school. Pupils' attainment in phonics has risen rapidly in the last two years.
- Teachers have fully evaluated the dip in reading in Year 6 in 2015 and have reorganised and strengthened their guided reading lessons so that now the focus is fully on reading for understanding, rather than just recognising the words. Tracking information shows that this year pupils are making faster progress in reading. Teachers are working hard to foster a love of reading and promote reading for enjoyment. The school is full of enticing books and well-laid-out areas which encourage pupils to sit and browse in the library. Teachers invite authors to come in to school to inspire children to improve their own writing. The school rewards good writing with prizes, celebrates book week annually, and takes part in the BBC 500 words competition and other initiatives.
- The youngest pupils learn to write in a variety of styles, enjoying working together as they talk through their ideas. The older pupils write confidently, for example in recounting a visit to the Imperial War Museum. There are now many more opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their extended writing skills.
- Skilled teachers use precision strategies to support the learning of pupils who have special educational needs or disability as well as those in the Key Stages 1 and 2 resource bases. The focus is on supporting speech and language development and providing a secure and nurturing learning environment in which pupils thrive.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the learning of small groups and individuals, both in class and in small-group work. Well-briefed students from Liverpool Hope University regularly work in the school, supporting learning under the supervision of class teachers. This means that many pupils have individual attention.
- Teachers mark books carefully and give precise guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across all subjects in the curriculum. Pupils have completed good research in history, geography and science. They regularly use electronic tablets to help their research.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school has worked hard to make sure pupils feel safe, confident and happy. Positive attitudes underpin the good relationships which exist across the school. As a result, attitudes to learning are exemplary and good manners abound.
- Pupils are proud of their work and display an enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils frequently work well together, listening to others' contributions to lessons with respect.
- Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of what bullying means and the many different forms it takes. They are not worried about being bullied in school because they and the entire school community will not tolerate prejudice or unfair behaviour. This includes derogatory language, which is challenged if it occurs. Many pupils commented that 'people should be treated or spoken to the way you wish to be'.
- Pupils' physical and mental health is nurtured. They understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and the role of keeping fit. The links with Widnes Rugby Club provide pupils with opportunities to learn from professionals. They enjoy a wide range of physical activities such as fencing, gymnastics and dance. The school recognises the importance of teaching pupils how to relax, unwind and calm down if necessary. Many afternoon sessions start with peer massage as a means of relaxation and refocusing on learning after playtime.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their contribution to the school community through their roles as play leaders, serving on the school or eco-councils and acting as buddies for other children.
- The school is innovative in its drive to raise expectations and holds regular careers weeks when visitors share their experiences and talk about different careers. The most recent event is celebrated in the library, where pupils' work on 'when I grow up I want to be' shows their ambitions in wishing to become, for example, an architect, nurse, cricketer, author, dancer, teacher or owning a shop.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Behaviour is typically excellent in lessons and at playtimes. This was confirmed by the views of parents, staff, including lunchtime supervisors, and the pupils themselves.
- The school environment is stimulating, with lovely displays of pictures, photographs, pupils' work and books. There is no litter or graffiti because pupils are proud of their school. All classrooms have their own rules displayed and the corridors are used to show topic work such as investigations into ancient Egypt and Greece. There is a striking display of work done by pupils in the resource bases about famous people who have overcome difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and physical limitations, entitled 'It doesn't hurt to be different.'
- Attendance is slowly rising and is broadly in line with national figures. The school promotes the value of attendance at every opportunity. The levels of persistent absence have reduced dramatically and are better than the national average.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- All groups of pupils currently in school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. School tracking information shows that they are steadily gaining ground and beginning to catch up with the standards expected for their age. Books show that progress is good, particularly in Year 6.
- In 2015, although attainment was below average, particularly in reading, at the end of Key Stage 2, a higher proportion of pupils than is found nationally had made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes can be affected by the often high proportion of pupils who join the school late in Key Stage 2 and who have not had the benefit of the good teaching that exists.
- The most-able pupils are set difficult challenges and expected to write at length. They achieve well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well provided with work which stretches them so that expectations are not lowered for their achievement. They make good progress in relation to their starting points.
- Pupils in the Key Stages 1 and 2 resource bases thrive in the atmosphere of nurture and care. Teachers skilled in developing speech, language and communication skills help them to make rapid progress.

- There is no gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in school. In some years, disadvantaged pupils are making faster progress than others and achieving better outcomes.
- Each year for the past three years, pupils have improved on their standard in the phonics tests at the end of Years 1 and 2 so that they are now achieving results close to national expectations.
- Standards are slowly rising in Key Stage 1, although results at the end of Year 2, in 2015, remained below average. These pupils did not have the advantage of the much better start now being provided in the early years setting and better phonics teaching.
- Pupils' excellent personal development, their respectful attitudes and willingness to work hard prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities which are well below those typical for their age and stage of development. They make good progress in the Nursery but still enter the Reception class below, and the majority well below, typical expectations. However, on entry to the Reception class, children have grown more confident and self-aware, are able to manage their feelings and behaviour and make relationships with others.
- Staff know their children well and match activities and teaching well to meet the needs and abilities of different learners. Pupils gain better listening and attention skills as their speech and language skills develop well. Specialist teachers from the resource base provide additional expertise in delivering speech and language programmes.
- Early and rapid assessments of each child's skills on entry mean that adults can quickly recognise where to pitch their teaching and range of activities. Assessment tracking shows that the children with the lowest starting points make rapid progress.
- Teaching is consistently good and often better. All adults have high expectations of children's attention, behaviour and progress. Children are responsive to their teachers and enjoy their learning.
- Children's learning journals record their activities and show the good progress they make. They enjoy many topics which are chosen to follow their special interests, for example, superheroes, winter celebrations and Chinese New Year.
- Assessments of children's progress are accurate and are carefully moderated by middle and senior leaders and the local authority.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. The welfare of children is actively promoted and their behaviour is good.
- Leaders and managers have a very accurate picture of the strengths of the Nursery and Reception classes and where it can be improved. For example, they are aware that there are some missed opportunities to promote learning effectively in the outdoor areas. The development plan for early years includes training of adults to make sure that questioning and challenge are as good when children are learning outdoors as when they are inside.
- Historically, very few children left Reception with good levels of development and therefore few were ready for the next stage of their education. The early years leader is now ensuring that all children, including those who are disadvantaged, those who have special educational needs and the most-able are making good progress so that in the future they will be able to make a flying start in Year 1.
- The school strives hard to include parents by providing 'stay and play' sessions, parent information sheets, phonics awareness and meetings when children join each class and move on to the next. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning and development at home.

School details

Unique reference number	133322
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10008164

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Burke
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Catherine Khan
Telephone number	0151 4244958
Website	www.oakfield-widnes.co.uk
Email address	Sec.oakfield@halton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 February 2014

Information about this school

- Oakfield is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds, with few pupils who speak English as a second language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is high and includes nearly two thirds of all pupils. The pupil premium supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is high.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above average.
- The school has two resource bases for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties and associated behaviours. Their special focus is on working with pupils to develop their speech, language and communication skills.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, including one lesson jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with a group of Year 6 pupils and spoke to many other pupils informally at break and lunchtimes and after assembly.
- Inspectors sampled work in pupils' books in all classes and across a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science and topic work in history, geography and religious education.
- The inspectors listened to pupils reading in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with representatives from the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair, senior and middle leaders, the senior professional tutor from Liverpool Hope University and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents. These included information relating to safeguarding and child protection, attendance and behaviour, development planning, subject planning, tracking information on pupils' progress, performance management systems and procedures for checking on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The views of staff were gained from the 32 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire.
- Inspectors gained the views of parents from 13 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, and from meeting parents bringing their children to school.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Steven Helm	Ofsted Inspector
Maria McGarry	Ofsted Inspector

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